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ABSTRACT

The student booklet presents short chapters illustrating the power unit of the Minneapolis Multi-Ethnic Curriculum Project for secondary schools. Nine brief chapters describe individuals, organizations, and labor unions and their relationship to power in the United States. Chapter I describes the early history of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, while Chapter II presents labor conditions in the Mesabi Iron Range. Chapters III through VI offer brief biographies of Saul Alinsky, a professional community organizer: Corky Gonzales, a Chicano youth leader: Barbara Jordan, a black member of Congress: and Fiorello La Guardia, the Italian American mayor of New York City. Chapter VII covers the Human Organizational Political and Economic Development, Inc. (HOPE) in Houston, Texas, a black community organization. Chapter VIII describes the Milwaukee Indian Community School, while Chapter IX discusses the job of a Spanish-speaking court interpreter. All the chapters focus on individual, group, community, political, or economic power. (CK)

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TENTATIVE

Minneapolis Multi-Ethnic Curriculum Project - POWER UNIT

SD 012 420

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IX

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINNEAPOLIS MULTIETHNIC CURRICULUM PROJECT

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INTERNATIONAL LADIES GARMENT WORKERS UNION

The large and important Jewish union is the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. It was organized in 1900 at a New York meeting. Eleven representatives were present. They said they spoke for two thousand workers. With a treasury of $30, the ILGWU began to make what its officers thought was "modest progress": its total income for 1900-1901 was $506.

The Union tried to move step by step toward solid organization.

About 1904 the ILGWU started going downhill: internal fighting, raids from other unions, unsuccessful strikes, decline in membership. A 1908 meeting led some people to consider quitting the union: "Some of us," recalls an early leader, "cried bitterly at these words." A decision was made not only to keep the union but also to open a new office.

And then, very quickly, everything changed.

On November 22, 1909, twenty thousand shirtwaist makers went on strike. Most of them were girls in their teens or early twenties. About two thirds of them Jewish.

The making of shirtwaists, or blouses, was a relatively new part of the garment industry. Since 1900 it had been growing rapidly. Its 1909 output in New York alone was fifty million dollars. Conditions in the shirtwaist shops tended to be better than in other parts of the industry. This was mostly because these shops were newer, cleaner, and more likely to use electrical power. But the girls also had many complaints. Female workers were charged for needles, power, and supplies. They were taxed for the chairs on which they sat; made to pay for clothes

lockers; fined if they came to work five minutes late. Efforts to organize them had failed. The common belief was that they could not be unionized.

When the strike began, the shirtwaist makers' union, part of the ILGWU, had slightly more than one hundred members. It had four dollars in its treasury. Small strikes had already been called against several firms. The employers, mostly east European Jews, had used strikebreakers to frighten the girls. The union leadership began to consider the gamble of a "general strike" in the shirtwaist industry.

On November 22 it called a meeting of workers. Thousands came, with crowds spilling over. A teen-age girl named Clara Lemlich, who had been picketing each day, spoke at the meeting: "I am a working girl, one of those striking against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in generalities. What we are here for is to decide whether or not to strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared -- now."

Excitement swept the meeting, people screaming, stamping feet, waving handkerchiefs. The chairman stood on the platform trying to restore order. When he finally was heard, he asked for a second. The whole crowd shouted its second.

Week after week the strike went on. Most shops were closed, a few tried to use scabs. The Women's Trade Union League sent help to the picket lines for the Jewish and Italian girls. Wealthy New York women provided bail money. College students donated $1,000 to the strike fund. In the first month alone, 723 girls were arrested and 19 sent to jail. The average daily bill for bail came to $2,500. Sentencing a striker, a judge said: "You are on strike against God and Nature.

His law is that man shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow."

Nothing in the strike was as remarkable as the girls themselves. Some turned out to be natural leaders, fighting with great boldness.

A young reporter went one morning to the garment center. It changed his sense of things: The girls, headed by teen-age Clara Lemlich, began singing Italian and Russian working-class songs as they paced in twos before the factory door. All of a sudden, around the corner came a dozen tough-looking men. The union label "gorillas" seemed well-chosen.

"Stand fast, girls," called Clara, and then the thugs rushed the line, knocking Clara to her knees, striking at the pickets, opening the way for a group of frightened scabs to slip through the broken line. Fancy ladies climbed out of cabs to cheer on the gorillas. There was a riot of scratching, screaming girls and fist-swinging men and then a patrol wagon arrived. The thugs ran off as the cops pushed Clara and two other badly beaten girls into the wagon.

I followed the rest of the pickets to the union hall, a few blocks away. There a relief station had been set up where one bottle of milk and a loaf of bread were given to strikers with small children in their families. There, for the first time in my life, I saw real hunger on the faces of my fellow Americans in the richest city in the world.

The strike was finally settled with improvements in working conditions. By the strike's end, the shirtwaist union had grown to ten thousand members. In the immigrant world, the shirtwaist makers had created excitement: these were our daughters. The strike came to be called "the uprising of the twenty thousand."

What the girls began, the men completed. Five months after the

shirtwaist makers strike was over, the cloakmakers declared their general strike. In the shirtwaist strike about 20,000 workers were involved. In the cloakmakers strike the number of strikers was three times as large.

The cloakmakers made many gains: a fifty-hour week, wage increases, and others. "Everywhere men and women, old and young, hugged and congratulated one another on the victory. Saturday afternoon, trucks decorated with flags, with bands of music, and carrying crowds of cloakmakers drove through the streets, announcing the strike had been settled."

The East Side had earned its joy. Until now there had been no more than a large scattering of Jewish immigrant workers who would sometimes stand together. By 1910 there was a Jewish working class, structured, disciplined, self-conscious. Through a bitter struggle against Jewish employers, the immigrant workers helped to create a new Jewish sense of strength. It went beyond their own ranks and into the immigrant community as a whole.

LABOR CONDITIONS ON THE MESABI IRON RANGE

The immigrant mine worker learned early that mining conditions were dangerous and the pay was poor. From 1905 through 1909, 106 Slavs, 105 Finns and Scandinavians, 38 Italians and 28 Americans were killed in Minnesota iron mine accidents.

The newcomers to northern Minnesota, like most immigrants, had a rosy picture in their minds of what life would be like in the United States. This picture did not match the reality of industrial America. This was especially true on Minnesota's iron ranges. Miners earned about $2.50 a day in 1909. The average pay for miners began to rise until it reached a high in 1928 of about $5.25. The average yearly earning of foreign-born mine employees was $644 in 1909. It was $981 for native born employees. Many of the miners' wives, particularly among the Slovenians and Croatians, took in boarders. Also, the cost of housing, food, clothing and fuel was higher in northern Minnesota than other places.

One miner reasoned that he and another miner as a two-man team produced 42 tons of ore a day. This sold for $147.00. They, in turn, received $2.25 each, leaving a "profit" of $142.50 for the mine-owner. The new miner also learned to expect seasonal lay-offs.

The immigrants learned the lesson of mine discipline. Family responsibilities forced them to remain on the Range. But many came to believe that only through united effort, action, and organization could they get any improvements in their work conditions.

Many Finnish workers clubs were started. At the clubs workers read, discussed their problems, heard lectures, sang, danced, were

married, celebrated the birth of children, conducted strike meetings, held classes for themselves and their children. At the hall the miner was able to forget his back-breaking work. He met with his own people and talked about the homeland.

Miners began to see the value of unionization. The first organization of ethnic groups was through the Western-Federation of Miners. This was a Socialist-based group. Ethnic groups were led by their own ethnic leaders.

The WFM handed United States Steel a list of demands in 1907. The company answered by firing 300 of the most active members of the union. The WFM leaders called a strike on the Mesabi Range on July 20, 1907.

The strike was doomed to failure before it began. The officials of U.S. Steel would not deal with the unskilled miners, especially not 'foreign' miners who believed in socialism. Fights between strikers and special deputies were common, and daily arrests were made. The local businessmen would not extend credit to the striking miners. The mines slowly began to open again. The mining companies imported 1,124 strikebreakers during one month. These men were mostly Montenegrins and Croatians, newly arrived in this country. They had no knowledge of the meaning of strikes.

The large numbers of new immigrant workers, the use of strong-arm deputies, and the hostility of local businessmen were too much for immigrant workmen to overcome. The strike was over.

The strike cost many Finnish miners their jobs. In re-hiring the strikers, the mining officials were careful to screen out the worst troublemakers. The Finns were the most active unionists and strikers.

Many mine officials took no chances and refused to rehire them. The non-Socialist Finns restated their loyalty to America, their belief in the free enterprise system, and their hatred of Socialism and unions. In one mining company, only 8% of its miners after 1907 were Finnish. Eighteen percent of the miners were Finnish before the strike.

Many workers either returned to their European homelands, took up a hard life of farm work, or became quiet workers in the mines. The believers in worker organization continued to hold meetings. They agreed not to repeat the same mistakes next time: not to strike unless well prepared; not to strike during times when strikebreakers were available; and not to put too much trust in state government.

The strike of 1916 was started when an Italian miner, Joe Greeni, opened his pay envelope and saw that his check was less than he expected. He threw down his pick, deciding to quit. To his surprise the entire shift in the underground mine went along with him. A group of Finnish and Slavic Socialists spread the news of the strike.

The striking miners drew up a long list of demands. They demanded a day wage of $2.75 for open-pit miners and $3.00 to $3.50 for underground miners. The higher pay was for those who worked on wet ground. The strikers wanted to be paid twice a month rather than once a month.

The company's answer was given when over 1,000 special mine guards were hired. They were armed, deputized, and sent on the Range to keep the mines working. The strike was to be ignored. The first World War had stopped the steady flow of unskilled workers. It was not possible to hire large numbers of strikebreakers. The strikers, then, had to be brought back to work. The mining companies hoped to do this by using strong-arm men. They were to break up strike meetings and frighten

individual workers.

These tactics worked perfectly for the mining companies.

Little by little, as the strike dragged through its third month, more of the strikers returned to work. By September 17 more than half of the mines on the Mesabi Range were open. The strike was called off.

The lessons of the 1916 strike were remembered by the immigrant workers during the years that followed. To fight the mining companies was to tangle with great power which could not be overcome.

Many miners gave up on self-improvements. They paid attention to improving the lives of their children, keeping them out of the mines. A good education was to help their children rise socially and economically.

SAUL ALINSKY: A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER

Known today as an organizer of community action groups, Saul Alinsky was trained as a criminologist. Early in his career he joined John L. Lewis in the formation of the CIO, a labor union organization. However, he found that his own role was outside of the labor movement. His first test was a slum where Chicago's stockyard workers lived. In this setting, Alinsky brought together workers, small merchants, union leaders and local churches. They made up the Back of the Yards Council. Using sit-downs, boycotts and other tactics, the Back of the Yards Council got help for the neighborhood from City Hall. At the same time it started a self-help program. The area became a model working-class community.

Alinsky's forwardness and toughness frightened the kind people who ran the social programs and businesses. But his effectiveness won him the support of Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, one of the most important Catholics of his day. Sheil introduced Alinsky to Marshall Field III, the Protestant millionaire.

Field offered Alinsky money to help him to carry his ideas and methods to other areas where the Back of the Yards pattern might work. Sure of his freedom of action, Alinsky accepted and the Industrial Areas Foundation was created. As a professional agitator, he went to work in cities across the country. The going proved rough. For a while he carried a business card reading, "Have trouble, will travel." During

many stays in local jails he wrote a book.

Alinsky helped organize the Woodlawn Organization known as TWO in a Chicago ghetto. Following a tragic race riot, churches in Rochester, New York, invited him to go to work in their black ghetto. He accepted.

Many people disagree with Alinsky's methods. Some of his ideas, as he expressed them, are presented here.

"Do you think when I go into a Negro community today I have to tell them that they're discriminated against? Do you think I go in there and get them angry? Don't you think they have resentments to begin with, and how much rawer can I rub them? What happens is this: When you find yourself completely caught, crushed in this kind of situation, you have a choice of two ways out: One way is to blow your top—you say, 'Who ever asked me to come into this world anyway?' And you wind up killing your wife and your kids and yourself. You read about these things in the papers. The other way is what 99 per cent of the population does—you rationalize. You say, 'Go fight City Hall. It's a rough world, tough for everybody. And this isn't too bad. I get my relief check regularly, anyhow, it could be worse. I'm better off than that guy down the block.' And you just exist. You keep all your anger, all your feelings pent up inside you.

What happens when we come in? We say, 'Look, you don't have to take this; there is something you can do about it. You can get jobs, you can break these segregated patterns. But you have to have power to do it, and you'll only get it through organization. Because power just goes to two poles—

to those who've got money, and those who've got people. You haven't got money, so your own fellowmen are your only source of strength. Now the minute you can do something about it you've got a problem. Should I handle it this way or that way? You're active. And all of a sudden you stand up.' That's what happened in Back of the Yards.

The biggest change I saw in the first twenty years or so that I was involved in social action is in the role of the churches. Back in the 1930s and '40s an organizer might expect to get some help from the CIO or from a few progressive AFL unions. There wasn't a church in sight. But in the 1960s they really moved into the social arena, the political arena. They took over the position organized labor had a generation ago. They were the big dominant force in civil rights.

The most important lesson is that people don't get opportunity or freedom or equality or dignity as a gift or an act of charity. They only get these things in the act of taking them through their own efforts.

This kind of organization can be built only if people are working together for real objectives. For instance, in Woodlawn, when we organized our first school boycotts back in '62, they were for very concrete objectives—for toilet paper in the schools, for better books and so forth. Basically people aren't concerned with abstract ideals. Sure, Negro parents are for a desegregated school system but, what they primarily want is to have a better-quality school right now, whether it is around the corner, whether it is segregated or not.

Now it's true that they are also very much opposed to segregation in any form. They'll lend moral support to the idea of desegregation. But the issue that will bring them out into meetings and into vigorous action, is to have something done about the schools which their children go to right now.

A mass organization must be built on many different issues—housing, jobs, schools, consumer prices, representation and power at the decision-making centers, health, crime and every other aspect of life that affects the welfare and future of the local people and their children.

When there are many different objectives there is constant daily activity and a sense of purpose and action and victory. People begin trading for each other's support, and alliances are formed between groups. One says to the other, 'My number-one interest is desegregation of the schools, and your number-one interest is getting rid of the dope pushers, and you over there, your number-one interest is that you're sick and tired of being bulldozed out of neighborhood after neighborhood on this urban renewal which doesn't benefit you. Well, I need your help to desegregate the schools, and you need my help to get rid of the dope pushers, and to make urban renewal a decent program for the poor as well as the others. So, let's make a deal. I'll support each one of you, and you support me.' This is the stuff of which organization is made.

CORKY GONZALES: BARRIO LEADER

The most influential Chicano leader among the youth is Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. Corky is in his 40s, married, the father of eight children, and lives in Denver, Colorado. He came up the hard way -- with his fists. A Golden Gloves champion who turned pro, he was a feather-weight contender for the championship from 1947 to 1955. In the 1960s, he worked within the Democratic party of Denver, Colorado. In 1965 he became the director of a youth program. Soon afterwards, he resigned in disgust. He had grown disappointed with the "Establishment" as well as the Democratic party. The following year he started the Crusade for Justice. This is a community-based organization that focuses on total family involvement. His poem, "I am Joaquin," is a most influential piece of literature. These accomplishments alone, however, do not explain Corky's appeal to youth. It is true that he is a well-built, beautifully tanned man. There is something more that sets Corky apart from the pack. Corky, however, represents the frustrations of barrio (city) youth, who have been so influenced by the public schools that they suffer from a mental block in speaking Spanish. Among the Chicanos of the Rio Grande Valley, the identity problem does not exist; they know that they are Mexican, and they learn Spanish. It is different for the barrio dwellers. The schools frighten them. Corky understands this, and he understands the loss of identity when the Anglo teacher changes one's name from Rodolfo to Rudolph and when one is punished for speaking Spanish. All this is expressed in his poem. Few of the national leaders really sympathize with the non-Spanish-speaking Chicano. However, they can go to Denver, and they

are accepted. While followers of the other national leaders might snicker at a young barrio youth for yelling, "Viva la relevacion!" instead of "Viva la revolución!", Corky would understand. He also understands the need of barrio youth to prove themselves. Such understanding is of increasing importance. The young people of the urban barrios are becoming the majority population of the Chicano community. You find them in San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland, Houston, Denver, and Los Angeles.

Corky is an organizer. The Crusade for Justice is a family organization. It has a center in which there is a school, a curio shop, a book store, and a social center. The school has about 200 students, from preschool to college. Since Corky is a realist, and since he knows that his school cannot help all Chicano children, he is working for community control of the schools. He says, "We intend to control every school in our community." This thought expresses his main thrust: the formation of Chicano communities in which Chicanos control their political, economic, social, and educational destinies. He realizes that there can be no freedom until this happens.

Corky was one of the few leaders who saw that cultural awareness was important among the youth. From the beginning he has encouraged Chicano studies programs at colleges and universities. In this, he showed a patience with youth that others did not have. Expressing insight into organization and an ability to judge the present situation, he said: "We realize that we have this tremendous lack of leadership that can handle organizing and creating a movement and bring it to a positive solution." In other words, every Chicano is a potential organizer, but he must be trained. To give the Chicano youth of the

United States a feeling of movement, he called the First Annual Chicano Youth Conference at Denver in 1969. This is now a yearly event that brings together Chicanos from all the barrios. Here they exchange ideas.

In Denver, Corky participates in community affairs. He has shown that he will not merely plan, but will also carry out those plans. In 1969, students walked out of the West Side High School, protesting the discrimination and lack of quality education, and demanding more Chicano teachers and administrators. Corky went with parents to support the students and to demonstrate against school authorities.

Gonzales has said that young people want action and that they are tired of meetings. Through his organization, youth are provided with an alternative. In his various activities, he realizes that "There are different levels of revolutionary action."

BARBARA JORDAN: NEW POWER ON CAPITOL HILL

Few members of the House of Representatives are in as strong a position of influence as Barbara Jordan of Texas.

There are several reasons for this. First of all, Miss Jordan is a part of the Texas "club" of congressmen, an extremely powerful group.

No other state congressional delegation has the power Texas has in committees. The committee chairmen call most of the shots in congress. They control law-making.

In Barbara Jordan's case just about everyone in Washington listens to what she has to say. Miss Jordan knows exactly how to get most of the things she really wants. She has gained respect among other congressmen. Miss Jordan is indeed a new power on Capitol Hill.

Says one of her fellow congressmen, "Her friendliness with the big boys from Texas just adds to the whole thing. She's with them all the time, meeting with them, having lunch with them, making a contact here and another one there. And they can't help noticing her, not just because she's black and a woman but mainly because they know she's so much smarter than most of them and there's no way they can pull the wool over her eyes on anything. Whether they like her or not they've got to respect her, and in Washington your contacts and the respect you get are mighty important things."

Misc Jordan had been a member of the Texas State Senate for six years. More than one-half of all the bills she wrote, were made into law.

Former President Lyndon Johnson had noted her Senate work and said she "proved that black is beautiful before we knew what it meant."

LBJ was "a man I adored," Miss Jordan says.

Miss Jordan's best friend in Washington is Rep. Charles Wilson. He says, "I know there'll be some who'll disagree with me. But in my view Barbara Jordan is the most influential member of Congress. I mean, if you're talking about the one person who is able to get to just anybody. She can make them stop and listen to what she has to say and convince them that she's right. Then you're talking about Barbara. And don't let anyone fool you, that's what influence is -- getting others to do what you want. Now, Barbara is very smart. What makes Barbara so special? It's that along with all her intelligence and skill she also has a certain moral authority."

Principles -- that word and other "old-fashioned" ones such as "integrity" and "honesty" and "truth" are very important to Barbara Jordan. She helped bring down President Nixon by holding the mirror of the Constitution up to his deeds.

Miss Jordan's view of her job is brief: "I am here simply because all those people in Texas cannot get on planes and buses and come to Washington to speak for themselves. They have elected me as their spokesman, nothing else, and my only job is to speak for them. That is the job of every one of the people's representatives."

To do her job effectively, Miss Jordan often works 12 to 14 hours a day. Her secretary says, "Some people misunderstand her because she is entirely serious on the job. She just feels that when she is taking care of the people's business she doesn't have time to try and please everybody by being what they might call 'nice.' She just wants everybody to state their business as briefly as possible so that she can have enough time to do her job. It's really as simple as that."

GIANT AMONG THE MAYORS

Fiorello La Guardia for 12 years was mayor of the nation's largest city - New York. When he took it over, it was in bad shape. When La Guardia left the mayor's office of New York, it had become the nation's best-governed big city.

He had taken office in 1933. To the job of running the Big Town he brought qualities of character which many Americans today seek in their leaders. He was absolutely incorruptible. He had courage and energy. He was devoted to the public welfare, and he had a passion for the underdog.

The city was almost broke. City government was full of graft and bribery. New York had 142,000 families on relief, and relief funds had run out.

La Guardia began with a boom. He kicked out the hacks and the crooks. He hired trained people. He stopped the graft. He cut salaries. He also helped New York's credit in the process. He started the relief funds again.

La Guardia was also known to keep important people waiting in his outer office while he talked to a little girl who came to the mayor with a problem.

La Guardia showed courage on some occasions. As mayor, he tried to involve himself in almost every major emergency in Manhattan. Once he boarded a burning ship, and he stayed until firemen got the blaze under control.

He was born on New York's lower East Side, of mixed Italian and Jewish parentage. He spent a lifetime fighting against corrupt govern-

ment.

He studied law at night while working during the day. For a short time he held a job with the state attorney general. Then he opened a law office. In 1916 he won election to Congress as a Republican.

A year later he resigned to join the army. He was a bomber pilot in the First World War. He ran again for Congress after the war and won. This time, too, he had Republican support. He had threatened that if the Republicans didn't support him, he would run against their candidate for governor.

The single thread running through his career in Congress was constant support of the common man. He defended the defenseless against exploitation by power and money. He worked for a five-day, 40-hour week; low-cost housing; unemployment insurance; and public works projects.

La Guardia then ran for mayor of New York and won. This was in 1932. He said: "We vow to bring no disgrace to the city by any act of dishonesty or cowardice . . . We vow to fight for the ideals and sacred things . . . We vow to obey the city laws and to bring respect."

He searched out and appointed the best-qualified people, whether or not they had helped get him elected.

He was easily the hardest-working mayor New York had ever had. Asked once how he relaxed from work, he said "More work."

During his 12 years of rule over New York, he not only changed its character -- he altered its face. He built bridges, highways, schools, hospitals, miles of new subway and the great Queens-Midtown tunnel. Slums were leveled and low-cost housing put up. Beaches and playgrounds were developed. The World's Fair rose out of a swamp. "La Guardia," wrote one observer, "made the citizens of the biggest

city in America understand that it was possible to make their city -- any American city -- whatever they wanted it to be."

La Guardia left office in 1945. He had simply decided, after serving three terms, not to run again. He thought of trying for the United States Senate, even toyed with the notion of going for President. The trouble was, he couldn't figure out which party to ask to nominate him.

In mid-1947 La Guardia learned that he had cancer. Then, on a bright blue autumn morning, when the sun was glinting off the skyscrapers of New York, Fiorello La Guardia died. He was 64.

Forty-five thousand people of every race and creed came to say farewell to him as he lay in state in the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

A lot of things were said about La Guardia after his death: "The best mayor New York ever had . . ." "Born leader of the common people . . ." Most of them were true.

HOPE IN HOUSTON

In 1967, some young Houston black men looked for an empty building they could use rent-free. They were all out of work and had no money. They did have a "program" and an organization in mind.

They found a building. The organization is Human Organizational Political and Economic Development, Inc. It is known as HOPE.

HOPE is a small operation with little money. Its programs are for job placement, recreation, vocational training, health and welfare.

HOPE's goal is to find black-operated solutions to the problems faced by the urban black poor. HOPE considers its blackness as the heart of its efforts and its effectiveness.

HOPE talked about black pride and black awareness—first as a matter of self-respect and dignity, then as a matter of self-interest, finally as a matter of community interest. Everywhere in Houston, they talked self-respect, self-help, pride in being black, unity of black people, and the organization called HOPE. People began to call the office and ask for jobs. Street corner rallies started.

More ghettos residents began to turn to HOPE, not only because HOPE was helping some people get jobs, but also because HOPE was telling it like it was. It was all based on black pride. As one member of HOPE puts it: "It was becoming fashionable, you see, to be black. There was a new-found

pride. The street guys coming in with us began to dress and groom differently. People, individuals were changing; the idea of black pride was spreading."

During these first months, HOPE operated without money. No salaries were paid. A campaign for donations from local businessmen did not work. Finally, after almost six months of operation, HOPE was granted initial funding by the Inter-Religious Foundation for Community Organization in New York City.

Despite the lack of money, HOPE's history has been encouraging. Within days after the organization had a name, its founders helped avoid a riot. A white service station manager shot a black. The crowd which gathered did not believe that the black had attempted robbery. Rocks were thrown, the people began to mill about, a fire bomb exploded. HOPE workers were there in minutes. They asked police officials not to show force until HOPE's people had a chance to calm the crowd. They shouted for the group to "cool it," and talked about "positive action." A riot was prevented.

HOPE helped black employees of a ghetto supermarket in a strike for higher wages. The employees won all their demands after a few days of picketing.

HOPE organized people and went with them to the employment program offices. They refused to leave until the program enrolled them for training and jobs.

HOPE organized a youth program of supervised recreation,

boxing and other sports, field trips, movies, and a sewing class for girls. Black culture is emphasized in its history and arts and crafts classes. A work pool sends adult-supervised youngsters to do odd-jobs in the community. The children themselves, ranging in age from 6 to 13, run the program with supervision from an adult advisory committee.

HOPE has developed a computer training program. This is in a building donated by the local Catholic diocese. It is taught by volunteer computer experts. HOPE has also developed a keypunch operator project. It is training about 50 students at a time.

A ghetto-based investment company is being formed under HOPE. Investments will include housing, new businesses, and others. They will not only improve the ghetto but will also keep the profits in the community.

HOPE is developing new health services for black people. HOPE plans for a complete health clinic which will open soon in the heart of the ghetto.

Another group, HOPE Supporters, is made up of concerned whites who live outside the ghetto. It has a membership of more than 300 persons. They contribute money, time, and materials to HOPE, Inc.

The organization is growing and becoming more well-known.

Providing nonviolent methods of social change, teaching the techniques of organization and concerted action—these are what HOPE is all about. But all these are based on a foundation of black pride, black awareness, black community

spirit.

"Black people," HOPE's newspaper, The Voice of HOPE, says, "believe in your worth as human beings, your dignity, your ability, and your beauty. Throughout our lives, we have been told that black means everything ugly, ignorant, criminal, dirty, and shameful...that anything that is associated with black has no value. THIS IS A LIE.

"The black community needs a black organization that can tell it like it is," says a community organizer with HOPE. "And what worries the white community—call it militancy, black power, whatever—is nothing more than black consciousness and black pride. And these are necessary to any kind of effective organization in the black community."

"We point out the bad points in the system and are accused of preaching hate and violence. We're just trying to get the folk together. Blacks must be aware, responsible, dedicated, and unified."

INDIANS IN CHARGE HERE

The Milwaukee Indian Community School is private and non-profit. It is one of the country's few schools for inner-city Indian children operated entirely by parents and other community representatives.

The school's building is an abandoned Coast Guard station on the shores of Lake Michigan. Started by three mothers in a church basement, the school was looking for more space. Members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) took over the Coast Guard station in 1971 to call attention to the plight of Indian people. AIM claimed the property under a treaty of 1868 which, it said, gave all abandoned Federal property to the Indian nations.

When AIM left the Indian Community School used the station as its new home. Today it has 76 students in grades 1-12. There is a waiting list of over 100 others. Many of those are now public school students. Some have already dropped out of school.

The school's board of directors is made up of members of the Oneida and Chippewa tribes. Its advisory council includes Sioux and Menominee, educators from the University of Wisconsin, and representatives of several religious organizations. Funds, equipment, volunteer tutors, and other resources have come from some of these organizations.

Beginning in school year 1973-74, the school's educational

program has been funded by the federal government. This money comes through the U.S. Office of Education under the Indian Education Act. This Act allows money to be granted directly to Indian tribes and organizations. This money is to support special programs and projects for improving education for Indian children.

The Indian Education Act is an important "first." It is the first Federal law requiring active participation by Indians in projects supported under the Act to advance their children's education.

The Milwaukee Indian Community School focuses on reading, writing, and other tools of learning.

"Starting so far behind their grade level," a teacher says, "our children must first get the basics they need to catch up. But everything we teach is taught from an Indian base. Our people historically have been great mathematicians and architects. Consider the cliff dwellings in Colorado or the Mayan and Aztec temples in Central and South America. Indians have been fine astronomers and navigators. So it's easy to build a sense of history, culture, Indian awareness, and pride into every unit."

Milwaukee's students realize they will need skills to compete for jobs. For each student goals center on good academic and career preparation, pride in a rich and varied cultural heritage, and confidence in one's ability.

John Thundercloud is such a student. He dropped out of

public school in his early teens. He stayed out four years. The Indian Community School helped him to try again. He made up those four years in record time. Last June he was among the school's first five graduates. This fall he plans to start at the University of Wisconsin.

John Thundercloud found a way to put it all together. Now he is on his way.

REFLECTIONS OF A SPANISH-SPEAKING INTERPRETER

"My name is Tony Abarca. I am the interpreter for the court and I have been asked to come here and interpret for you."

A person has the right to see and question witnesses against him. For many Spanish-speaking people, however, this cannot be done—in English. Thousands of Spanish-speaking citizens in the Southwest know little or no English. I help deal with the language difference. Identify with a Spanish-speaking witness for a while, and allow me to interpret the role of the professional court interpreter.

"They (judge and lawyers) are going to ask you some questions about the case. These are things that have happened in your personal life—your personal background—and other things."

For many Spanish-speaking citizens, the administration of justice is strange. Often these citizens are uncomfortable in the court. They are frightened by rumors of what is about to take place.

"Look at me! I want to tell you this and it's very important—listen to me! If you do not understand the questions, be sure and tell me. I will tell the lawyer or judge, and he will put it in different words."

"I am here so that you can understand all that is said. I am going to translate all the questions they ask in English. I will ask them of you in Spanish. All of the questions will first be asked in English."

At this point I have just begun to establish the lines of communication.

Some think that just because a man speaks English and Spanish he can be an interpreter. This is not so! The role of the interpreter is important in hearing and representing Spanish-speaking citizens.

A qualified court interpreter must first have a working knowledge of the court. He/she must know the characteristics of the people. She/he must know how the people think. He/she must understand the slang and special terms of the witnesses. He/she must be able to communicate at the witnesses educational level.

Nueces County, Texas, has a professional court interpreter as part of the county staff. Unfortunately, elsewhere in the Southwest they do not have professional interpreters. Instead, Government officials often depend on Spanish-speakers "who happen to be available." They serve as temporary so-called interpreters. Their only training is a reasonable knowledge of both languages. Use of these untrained individuals may harm the rights of Spanish-speaking citizens.

Lawyers are often not familiar with our ethnic group. They have difficult times in and out of court with Spanish-speaking clients.

When I speak to legal organizations, I always suggest the use of simple and small words in the questioning of a Spanish-speaking witness:

"Fellas, you have several years of college behind you. Your vocabulary is representative of the legal profession. This vocabulary was partly acquired in law school. There is a definite need and place for its use. But don't use it with a poor Mexican American witness who is half-scared to death and has but a sixth grade education. Make it simple. Use words of one syllable."

"Don't ask him, 'Where are you employed?'—ask him, 'Where do you work?' Don't ask him to give the court his marital status—ask him, 'Are you married?'"

"Don't ask, 'Will you please state for the record your place of residence?' The witness often doesn't even know what record is—what state is. Place of residence doesn't mean anything to him Instead, just plain ask, 'Where do you live?—What is your address?'."

A recent exchange between a lawyer and Mexican American witness shows what I mean. The witness was a 58 year old man who had a second grade education. He had been a laborer all of his life. The lawyer had asked some questions. In summarizing, the lawyer turned to the witness and said, "To be sure that I have your story straight, please give me a chronological narrative of the events as they occurred." I looked at the lawyer in amazement. Calmly I told him he was crazy and to please ask the question again, in a similar way. Most of the time I will ask questions of witnesses even when I know they won't understand them. But this attorney's

question was just unreasonable. The witness would not have known what was meant. The lawyer should have known better.

I've given a brief look at a issue for the courts and the Spanish-speaking community. There is a great need for court interpreters. Spanish-speaking citizens' rights are in jeopardy because of language differences.

It is difficult for the courts to see the need of interpreters in view of the undecided positions in the value of bilingual, fluently educated citizenry.

The courts cannot wait. Differences in languages must not stand in the way of equality of justice.